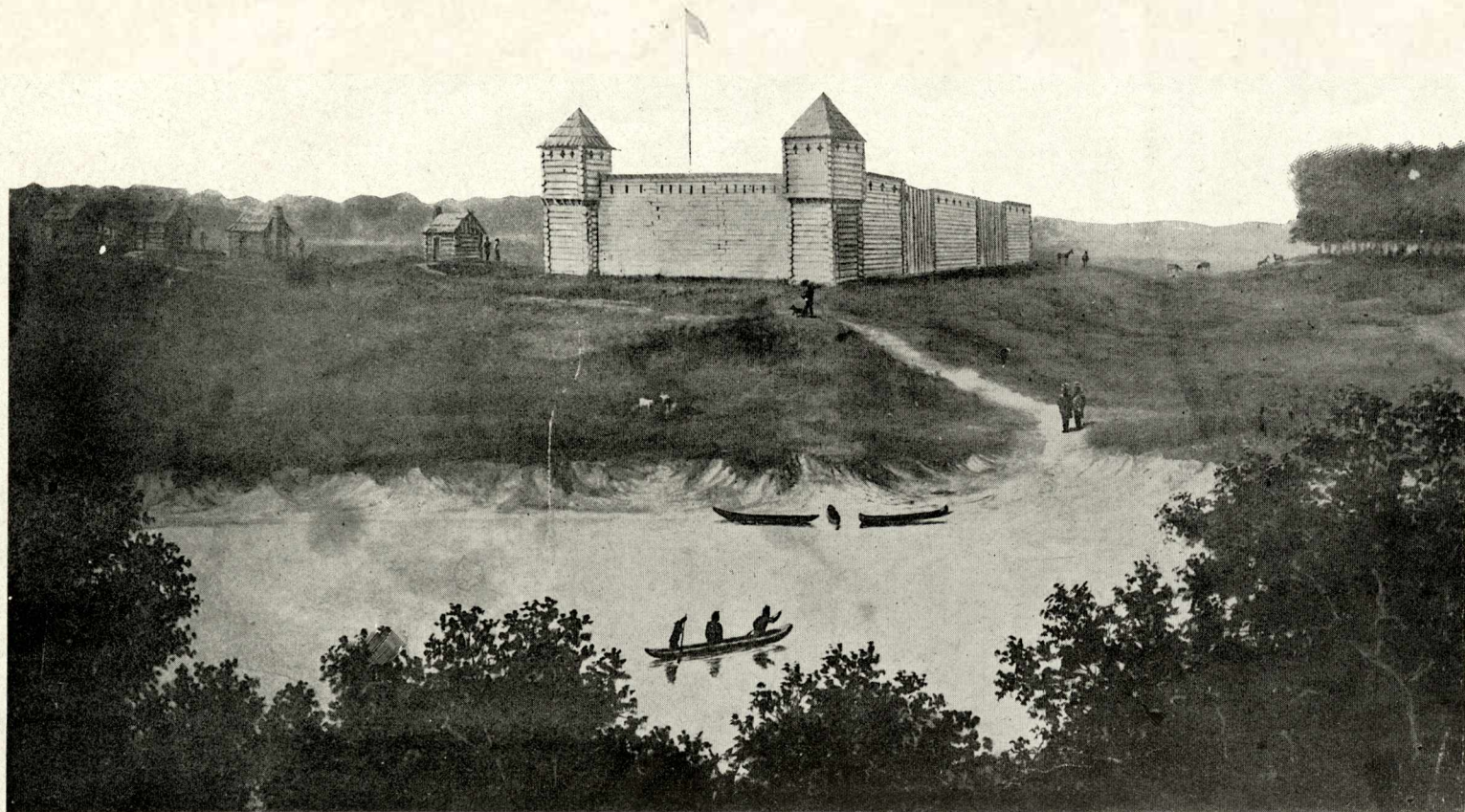


24 1963

SOUTH

THE STORY
OF
FORT HARRISON



FORT HARRISON

From a Painting made some years after the Fort had been demolished, but which is generally regarded as the most faithful representation of the original structure.

The Story of Fort Harrison



THE following bit of history was read by D. W. Henry, of Terre Haute, before the members of the Fort Harrison Country Club during the celebration of the one hundredth and thirty-ninth anniversary of the independence of the United States by members of the club and their invited guests.

IN Celebrating the one hundredth and thirty-ninth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we are more fortunate than millions of others who are celebrating this day, because we stand on ground made sacred by the heroes of the war of 1812.

"This club is to be congratulated because it occupies the only historic ground in this part of the state of Indiana and there is no more beautiful spot on this earth.

"There are certain great characters that stand up before us in the misty past in connection with this hallowed ground—men whose history is connected with the history of this Wabash Valley.

"This country club now becomes the guardian of this historic ground and it will be your duty, as well as your pleasure, to preserve it, not only for this, but for future generations. Old Fort Harrison will be more important as the years roll around.

"I am going back into some of the things that happened which have made history in connection with this old fort. I can give you nothing original, but only to remind you of historical facts. Let us get our minds back to the days of 100 years ago—

no railroads East, West, North or South—none to Chicago, Indianapolis or Evansville, because there were no such cities in that day. No buildings—no streets—nothing but forests and plains—no people outside of the fort, excepting the red men.

"This fort was not built of masonry and cement as the forts of nowadays, but of logs and the old building standing on this ground is formed of a part of the logs of the old fort.

"It had been known for years to the outside world that the Wabash Valley was a rich fertile country. Great interests had contended for this valley and these interests were higher up than the mere handful of settlers.

"This locality has been under several flags. When Columbus discovered America, by that right it all belonged to Spain, so far as the white man was concerned, and, if we had lived here then, we would have been Spanish subjects. Later the Englishman came and the different grants made by the crown of England on the eastern shores of this country extended indefinitely west and by reason of these grants we would have been English subjects had we lived here then.

"Two hundred and sixty-seven years after the discovery by Columbus, a Frenchman by the name of DeAubrey took 400 soldiers through this valley to Canada, and, if history is correct, camped near here. The natural way for him to have gone would have been up the Ohio river, but the English had possession of Pittsburgh or Fort Pitt and, consequently, it was safer to go by the way of the Wabash River and Fort Wayne.

"I want to call your attention to another condition. As I have said, the French claimed all of Canada, or the St. Lawrence Valley, and their claims extended down the Wabash Valley. You will also note that Louisiana was a French possession and they claimed the Mississippi Valley as well as the Wabash Valley.

"Vincennes, from its foundation to the close of the French occupation, belonged to the province of Louisiana and the upper Wabash belonged to Canada. It is not known where the dividing line was between Louisiana and Canada, but in 1732 it was fixed near where Terre Haute now stands. So you will see that we belonged to two contending interests—the Louisiana interest and the Canada interest during the French occupation of this country. So, for 52 years, if living here, we would have been subjects of France.

"It was 52 years after deAubrey traveled this valley that General Harrison marched up from Vincennes and took possession of everything he saw in the name of the United States and built Fort Harrison. He went on to Prophetstown and fought the battle of Tippecanoe nearly a year after he built Fort Harrison. The battle of Tippecanoe was the deciding battle so far as the Indians were concerned for all this country as between the Indians and the Americans.

"When I walked over the battleground of Tippecanoe and saw the magnificent monument erected thereon, I thought what a great victory had been achieved in favor of the white man as against the savage.

"And some day, perhaps not in my life time, it should be the final achievement of this Country Club to have erected on this spot a monument to the memory of the heroes of the battle of Fort Harrison.

"The battle of Fort Harrison was the last battle fought along the valley of the Wabash and the red men finally learned that the English were his masters, not only at Terre Haute, but the length and breadth of the Wabash Valley.

"Let us take another view of history so far as the title of this country is concerned. At the time of the discovery of America, this country was occupied by the Miami Indians and by right of discovery, subsequently, England claimed the central portion of America from sea to sea and granted the same in her charters to New York, Massachusetts, Virginia and Connecticut. The three countries of the old world most interested in the new world were France, Spain and England. France, by the same right that England claimed this country, claimed the whole valley of the St. Lawrence and "the wilderness westward and southward to the uttermost bounds."

France claimed and occupied all of the land north of the Ohio river. After a while the Englishman came over the mountains by the way of Pittsburgh, then called Fort Pitt, and then came along the French and Indian wars. In the settlement of peace between France and England, the King of France ceded to the British everything northwest of the Ohio river. We might be Canadian subjects if it had not

been for the subsequent history which I will now tell.

"The greatest character in making that history was Gen. George Rogers Clarke, who was a brother of the Clarke of the Lewis and Clarke expedition through the great Northwest.

"Patrick Henry was Governor of Virginia and the French occupied Kaskaskia, Ill., and Vincennes. In 1778 Clarke asked permission to raise a regiment and capture the French posts at Kaskaskia and Vincennes. He appealed to Patrick Henry and laid before him his plans. Gov. Henry at once saw the importance of the proposition and heartily coincided with Clarke, but it was agreed between them that it would be kept a secret. Clarke was to enlist his soldiers for the purpose, ostensibly, of protecting the Kentucky frontier. What he was about to undertake and the vast territory that he was to regain from the French, now comprises the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.

"This expedition is the most important one ever undertaken in the Mississippi Valley and it should be kept familiar to all students of history.

"I know of no early history more interesting and instructive to our young people than the facts told by Gen. Clarke in his own words: 'On the 24th of June 1778 we left out little island (then Louisville), which are the beginning words of his narrative of that expedition. 'On July 4th we got within a few miles of the town of Kaskaskia, Ill., and on July 5th its leading citizens were put in arms and the whole town and settlement was captured.'

"After this capture Gen. Clarke turned his attention to the capture of Vincennes. In this connection, I want to introduce a new character, a Catholic priest by the name of Father Gibalt, who was the Kas-

kaskia priest. Vincennes was a part of his jurisdiction, and this priest became a great friend of Clarke's and told him that the capture of Vincennes could be made without much trouble. So this Father was sent at once to Vincennes; he went among his people and also the army and explained the matter to his people and they finally took the oath of allegiance when the American flag was displayed. Thus you will see that the Wabash Valley was practically turned over to Gen. Clarke in favor of the United States without any shedding of blood.

"Gen. Clarke sent Capt. Leonard Helm to take command at Vincennes, so Capt. Helm was the first Governor of the country of which Vigo County is a part under the authority of Virginia.

"When Governor Patrick Henry received full information of Clarke's success, the General Assembly of the State of Virginia in October 1778, passed an Act, of which the following is an extract:

" 'All the citizens of the commonwealth of Virginia, who are already settled or shall hereafter settle on the western side of the Ohio, shall be included in a distinct county, which shall be called Illinois County.'

"So you will see that we were then in the County of Illinois with the county seat at Kaskaskia, Ill., so if we had lived here then and wanted a marriage license, we would have to have gone to Kaskaskia to secure our marriage license.

"You will begin to see, in looking into our history, that we have belonged to so many people and so many places and to so many governments, that it is very difficult to tell how many ownerships have been over us.

"This was in 1778. The Revolutionary War was concluded by the Treaty of Peace

held at Paris, and in that convention it was insisted by the British that the Ohio river should be the northern boundary. The American commissioners contended that the Great Lakes should be the boundary instead of the Ohio river, so it was again a question whether Vigo County would be a part of Virginia or a part of Canada.

"You will remember that we were once on a dividing line between Canada and Louisiana and didn't know which we belonged to under French domination. In this convention at Paris it was again the question whether we belonged to the United States or to Canada and Great Britain. The American Commissioners took the ground that General Clarke had conquered the country and was in undisputed military possession of it at the time of these negotiations. This fact was affirmed and proven by the correspondence between General Clarke and Gov. Patrick Henry and it was upon these facts alone that the British commissioners finally reluctantly abandoned their claim and left Vigo County a part and parcel of the United States.

"Again I want to call your attention to the fact that if it had not been for the expedition of General Clarke, had it not been for his success, the northern boundary line of the United States would have been the Ohio river instead of the Great Lakes.

"In the circle in the center of Indianapolis stands a statue of Gen. George Rogers Clarke. I never pass by that statue without feeling like it is my duty to lift my hat in memory of that old Revolutionary hero and the conqueror of the Northwest.

"Let us go back again. The occupation of Vincennes by Captain Helm was a short one, for the British commander at Detroit raised an army and with General Hamil-

ton passed down the Wabash Valley to recover both Vincennes and Kaskaskia. Thus you will see that Vigo County was an actual part of the marching armies of the Revolutionary War.

"The English army reached Vincennes in the latter part of 1778. The entire army to guard that post consisted of Captain Helm and a single man. He finally agreed to surrender with all the honors of war. When this news reached General Clarke at Kaskaskia, he was aware that the British had determined to recapture all of his prizes and drive him out of Illinois. But nothing daunted him. He moved across Illinois through the wet prairies and swamps and streams in the month of February, and so secret and rapid had been his movements that General Hamilton had no notice of his near presence. One hundred Indian warriors had offered to join General Clarke. The attack was made and Hamilton immediately surrendered to Clarke and his whole force were made prisoners of war. This ended the struggle between the English and the Americans for the possession of this territory and the authority of Virginia was again re-established over all the Northwest.

"This expedition to capture Vincennes is what gave rise to circumstances which gave Vigo County its name.

"Col. Francis Vigo was a boy in a Spanish regiment; went to Havana, then to New Orleans, then he left the services and became an Indian trader for some New Orleans capitalists. He made his way to St. Louis and engaged in the fur trade for himself. He traveled and traded with the Indians east and west of the Mississippi. He understood their character and they believed in him, for he never lied to them.

"And when he learned of the loss of Vincennes to General Clarke, he knew also his

Washington

Genl Z Taylor
Dear Sir

I have the ^{satisfactor} ~~pleasure~~ to pre-
sent you with the accompanying walking-
stick, which I have caused to be manufac-
tured out of one of the black-walnut pickets
of old "Fort Harrison"

As it constitutes a part of your
wall of ~~defence~~ ^{defection} in your memorable
defense of the valley of the Wabash, it may
serve to remind you that this scene of your
early renown is situated in the midst of
those who have remembered your services
and appreciated your character. This ~~county~~
~~in which it stands~~ is now the harrow whig
County of ^{the} ~~any~~ State, - made so by the in-
fluence of your name - and permit me,
in ^{their} behalf of ~~its~~ citizens, to express the hope
that you may yet find it convenient to
revisit our beautiful prairie - made
almost classic ground by having the
names of Harrison and Taylor intimately
blended with its history.

I have the honor
R.W.T.

A letter from Richard W. Thompson to Zachary Taylor, then President of the United States.
accompanying a cane made from one of the original pickets of Fort Harrison.
of which post the President was the first commander.

Washington D.C.
May 10, 1849.

Dear Sir,

You will please accept my warm
thanks for the beautiful present of a
walking stick 'manufactured' out of one of
the black walnut spindles of old Fort Harrison.

Associated as this gift must always
be with my own early career and with the
history of the State of Indiana, this article
rep. I now replete with the elements of
greatness & of strength, it will possess peculiar
value - this more as it comes from the hands
representative of those who I am proud
to number as my friends. I trust that it
may yet be my privilege to visit them & renew
the associations of my early scene on the Nation's

With the assurances of my regard.

I remain yr. sincere friend

Wm. R. Thompson,

Terre Haute,

Ind.

Z. Taylor.

The reply of President Taylor accepting the cane.

extreme financial distress, and he left his business and joined him at Kaskaskia. Clarke sent him to Vincennes and on his way he was captured by a band of Indians under command of a British officer and carried to Vincennes. On his way he ate the paper which would have convicted him of being a spy. He was held on parole. Father Gibalt, who had been instrumental in securing Vincennes to General Clarke, became interested in Colonel Vigo and tried to have him liberated. After church services one Sunday morning, Father Gibalt informed General Hamilton that he would furnish no more supplies to the garrison until Colonel Vigo was released. Colonel Hamilton consented to release him on the condition 'not to do anything injurious to the British interests on his way to St. Louis.'

"Colonel Vigo went to St. Louis, and having done nothing on the way against the British, he returned to Kaskaskia and at once placed a large amount of money in General Clarke's hands and induced the French merchants of St. Louis and New Orleans to contribute liberally.

"Colonel Vigo was to the claiming of the Northwest territory what Gouvenour Morris was to the Revolutionary War.

"For all this generosity the government of the United States seemed to be oblivious and forgetful as to what he had done. Lawyer after lawyer had worn out his patience in trying to get the government to repay these sums which Colonel Vigo had advanced to General Clarke. And long, long years after this, and long years after his death, the government woke up to the fact that this debt was a just one and ought to be and was paid.

"And yet this old man died at the age of 96, March 22, 1836, in a miserable shack in the city of Vincennes. In and amidst all

his poverty, when the government owed him this money, no murmur nor complaint ever escaped his lips.

"Like Lafayette, he came to this country when this country needed him; when this country was poor, he gave without asking, and when this nation had grown great, powerful and rich, it allowed this feeble, old and poor and childless man to die without doing anything for his comfort. It looked at his death like the gratitude of this country towards Colonel Vigo had been written in the sand.

"However, Colonel Vigo had implicit faith in the fact that the government would some time pay it, for in his will he left a bequest of \$500.00 to purchase a bell and if you will listen some day at the ringing of the bell in the Court House of Vigo County, you will hear the bell that Colonel Vigo left to the county that took his name.

"In 1781 Virginia released her claims to the northwest territory; subsequently, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut made their concessions. So in 1787 this whole country, known as the Northwest, was taken over by the general government of the United States.

"The first county to be organized in this territory was Knox, 1791; the next was Clarke, 1802; Dearborn, 1805; Harrison, 1808; Franklin, Jefferson and Wayne, 1810.

"So at the time of the battle of Fort Harrison there were only seven counties in Indiana. Forty counties were afterward formed out of the original Knox County. The actual northern boundary line of Knox County seems to have been the northern lines of the following counties: Parke and Putnam. Sullivan County was formed from Knox County in 1916 and Vigo County from Sullivan in 1818.

"Of the great characters connected with this history-making epoch, the general who built the fort was afterward made Governor of Indiana and finally President of the United States, but, like the brave captain, who afterwards defended it, died in the Presidential office. He belonged to the old revolutionary stock and his father had been one of the signers of the Declaration. He lies buried at a little place called North Bend on the Ohio River, in sight of the trains on the Big Four Railroad, and I never pass that way without looking out upon the resting place of our benefactor, Wm. Henry Harrison.

"He, too, was succeeded by a grandson, who was as great, if not greater, and who afterwards was a general in the war for the Union and President of the United States.

"Of the commander of the fort on that memorable day (Zachary Taylor) there is much to say. He was a young man only 30 years of age. For his bravery in defense of the fort he received the brevet of major, and in 1814 was made a major by commission. He went against the Indians and British on Rock River and saw much hazardous service until the treaty of peace with Great Britain.

"In '32 he became a colonel of the First Infantry and served in the Black Hawk War. In '36 he was ordered to Florida for service in the Seminole War, and the next year he was made brigadier general.

"On the annexation of Texas to the United States, Mexico threatened to invade Texas and Gen. Taylor was ordered to defend it as a part of the United States. His life then became a part of the history of that war.

"He had no political aspirations, looking forward to the time when he should retire from the army and begin again a farmer's

life. But he was a popular hero of a foreign war and by reason of his great popularity was nominated and elected to the Presidency in 1848.

"His life was simple and sincere—was thoroughly devoted to the teachings of the fathers. In his only message to Congress, which was his last will and testament to the country, he solemnly pledged himself as follows:

"'But attachment to the Union of the states should be habitually fostered in every American heart. For more than half a century, during which kingdoms and empires have fallen, this Union has stood unshaken. Whatever dangers may threaten, I shall stand by it and maintain it in its integrity to the fullest extent of its obligations imposed, and the power conferred upon me by the Constitution.'

"Gen. Taylor could fight the Indians at Fort Harrison, on Rock River, Illinois, and in the Black Hawk War. He could fight against the Seminole Indians in Florida and the Mexicans in the State of Texas, but when he became President of the United States the insistence of politicians was too much for him. He could fight for his country on the frontier but he had not the constitution to stand up against the politicians.

"He did not serve out his time. On July 4, 1850, he was taken suddenly ill and five days thereafter was a corpse in the executive mansion. His courage was unflinching and was that courage which makes the death of the departing Christian seem like gentle slumber. These were his expiring words: 'I am ready to die. I have faithfully endeavored to do my duty.'

"Think again of this last message: 'Whatever dangers may threaten I shall stand by it and maintain it in its integrity to the fullest extent of its obligations im-

posed and the power conferred upon me by the Constitution.'

"Words of a warrior, patriot and a statesman, loving his country.

"But what could have been his anguish and humiliation on his dying bed could he have seen into the future but a few years and have seen his own son-in-law, Jefferson Davis, President of the Southern Confederacy, making an assault upon the foundations of the Union which this old general had spent his entire life in defending in order to preserve a great and united government for coming generations.

"The characters connected with this fort were great ones and in honoring them, we honor ourselves.

"Upon the fate of battles hangs the destiny of nations and countries. Yorktown was the final stand for the British. Appomattox was the final stand of the Confederacy; and when I walked over the battlefield of Gettysburg I saw that that was the supreme but fruitless effort of the Confederacy to destroy the North. The battles of Tippecanoe and Fort Harrison were the Waterloos of the Red Man and were the final stands of the Indians for supremacy in the Wabash valley.

"It has been my lot in the last few years to see the descendants of the Wyandotte and Shawnee Indian in their homes, surrounded by family, making a most useful citizen in the occupation of a farmer. I looked at him and thought what a great

change had come over him since he left the Wabash Valley 100 years ago.

"Not long ago I was on the reserve of the Miami Indians in old Indian Territory—now Oklahoma—a small reserve without any special value other than farming lands, until the white man came along and discovered valuable finds in zinc and lead. When these Indians would come around to look at what the white man was doing, I looked at them and with the mind's eye, I tried to look back into history 100 years, to the time when the forefathers attacked this fort in the Wabash Valley.

"In conclusion, the past that we have been wading through was a dismal and dark time in our history; yet, today we are surrounded and living in the best government on earth; the best state in the Union; no better county in the State of Indiana, and a city on the banks of the Wabash that we are all proud of, and filled with the best people this side of Heaven, standing on the spot where the heroes of other days suffered that we might have our fullest and freest liberty.

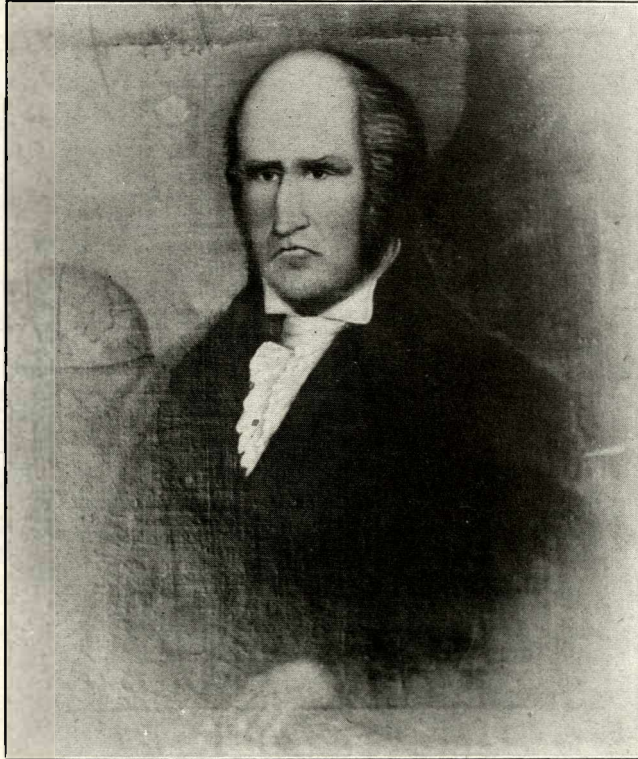
"Let our minds go back to the brave ones who fought on this soil; back to our ancestors who subdued this wilderness; back to the fathers who wrote the Immortal Declaration, and let us here and now renew our eternal allegiance to this nation as American citizens, and strive always to keep it the best government on this earth."



COL. FRANCIS VIGO

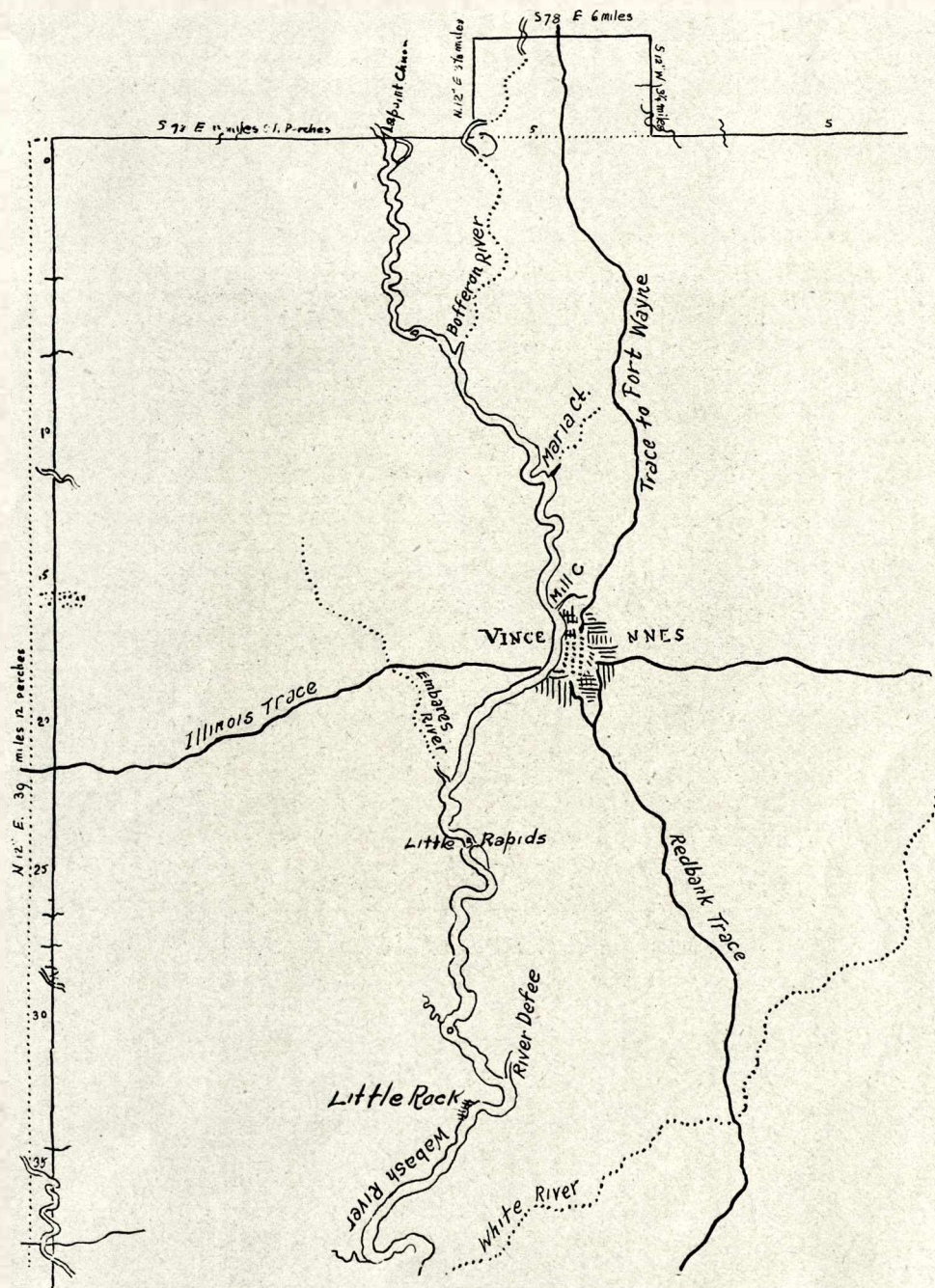


The First Territorial Hall at Vincennes.



GENERAL GEORGE RODGERS CLARK

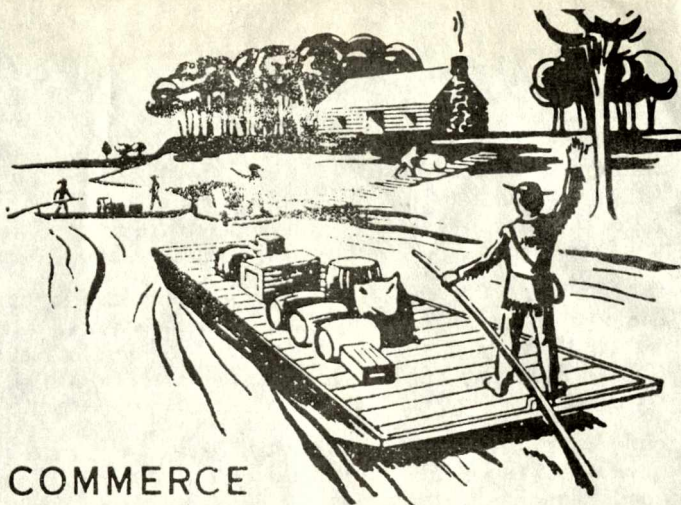
Whose campaign to conquer the Northwest Territory was financed by Col. Vigo.



Government survey of the Wabash in 1803 showing the trail to Fort Wayne.
About 50 miles of the trail is shown in this map.

TERRE HAUTE

Our Long Ago Past



TERRE HAUTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

631 CHERRY STREET TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47808

Historic Old Fort Harrison

The advance northward from Vincennes through the wilderness began on the morning of Sept. 26, 1811. The troops arrived at a point on the Wabash sixty-five miles from Vincennes and a short distance above the present site of Terre Haute, on the second of October. They were now within the heart of the purchase of 1809, which had been so strenuously opposed by Tecumseh. Here on beautiful high ground on the east bank of the river, Harrison determined to erect the fort he had been advocating for a year and a half. The stockade with a block house at three of the angles was completed on the 27th of October and christened Fort Harrison by Daviess, a great admirer of the commander. It was described by the latter as "a very handsome and strong work."

On the night of September 4, 1812, Fort Harrison was attacked. A number of squatters lived in the vicinity of the fort. On the evening of the third two young men who were making hay were killed by the Indians. Late in the evening of the following day, between thirty and forty Indians arrived from Prophet's Town. The garrison was in command of Captain Zachary Taylor. The young commander was just recovering from a severe attack of the fever. A majority of his men were ill. About 11 o'clock in the night the firing by one of the sentinels gave the alarm of the attack. The men were ordered to their posts immediately. The Indians had set fire to one of the block houses. The fire ascended to the roof and endangered the adjoining barracks which helped to form the fortifications.

"Although the barracks were several times in a blaze, and an immense quantity of fire directed against them, the men used such exertion that they kept it under and before day raised a temporary breast-work as high as a man's head. The Indians continued to pour in a heavy fire of ball and an innumerable quantity of arrows during the whole time the attack lasted, in every part of the barracks. I had but one other man killed, and he lost his life by being too anxious. He got into one of the galleries in the bastion and fired over the pickets, and called out to his comrades that he had killed an Indian, and neglecting to stoop down in an instant he was shot dead. . . . After keeping up a constant fire (which we began to return with some effect after daylight) until about six o'clock the next morning, they removed out of the reach of our guns. . . . We lost the whole of our provisions but must make out to live on green corn until we can get a supply."

Fortunately, Taylor's presence of mind did not forsake him. He ordered buckets of water brought from the well. A portion of the roof that joined the block-house was thrown off. The fire was finally extinguished and a temporary breastwork raised to fill in the breach. There is an interesting story of the part played by a woman, Julia Lambert, in the defense of the fort. The water in the well, the sole source of supply, which was being drawn up by a bucket, was about to fail. Julia Lambert then asked to be lowered into the well. She filled the buckets by means of a gourd and thus helped to save the day. The Indians all the while poured in a heavy fire of ball and an innumerable quantity of arrows. About six o'clock on the next morning, September 5, the Indians withdrew. Before leaving, the horses and hogs belonging to the nearby settlers were driven up and shot. The cattle and oxen were driven off. Only one man was killed and two wounded in the fort during the attack. After waiting a few days, Taylor dispatched two men by water to Vincennes for provisions and reinforcements. They found the river so well guarded that they were obliged to return. Two other men were then sent out with orders to go by land, depending entirely on the woods in the daytime.

As soon as the news reached the territorial capital, Colonel William Russell of the Seventh Regiment, U. S. Infantry, marched to the relief of Fort Harrison with 1,200 men, reaching that place without meeting any opposition on September 16. The fort was not molested thereafter. "The brave defense made by Captain Zachary Taylor at Fort Harrison is one bright ray amid the gloom of incompetency which has been shown in so many places," wrote John Gibson, acting governor of Indiana Territory.

Terre Haute Remembers Way Back When

Terre Haute was laid out and platted in the fall of 1816 by the Terre Haute Land Company, composed of Cuthbert and Thomas Bullett of Louisville, Kentucky; Abraham Markle of Harrison; Hyacinth LaSalle of Vincennes and Jonathan Lindley of Orange County, Indiana. The company held patents from the United States to thirteen tracts of land on the Wabash river in the vicinity of Fort Harrison. All titles to lots in this purchase were derived from these men as original proprietors.

The word "Terre Haute" derived from the French "terre" land, and "haute" high, signifies high land. This name was bestowed by early explorers not so much on account of its elevation as from the fact that this is the only high ground approaching the river for several miles. Beautifully situated on the east bank of the Wabash River in Vigo County, it spreads out on a high level plateau about fifty feet above the river surface.

In the original Terre Haute a belt of heavy timber and a tangled growth of underbrush and vines extended along the river bank reaching eastward as far as Sixth Street where it met the prairie, which in turn extended to the bluff. Some of the oldest citizens tell of their parents shooting squirrel and other game in the woods where Sixth Street now extends.

In 1817 the new town of Terre Haute presented a truly pioneer appearance. There were only a few log cabins scattered along the river and these of the rudest description. After Indiana's admission into the union, January 21, 1816, new life was infused into the pioneers of Terre Haute, and the settlement began at once to improve.

In January, 1818, Vigo County was organized and as an inducement to locate the county seat at Terre Haute, the proprietors deeded to the county some 80 lots besides the public square and paid into the county treasury \$4000.

The original site of Terre Haute extended from the river east to the west side of Fifth Street, and from the north side of Oak on the south to the south side of Eagle Street on the north. Lots were numbered from 1 to 308. Third Street now was Market Street then and Wabash now was Wabash then. All east and west streets were sixty-five feet wide except Wabash, which then was 81½ feet wide. The streets north and south were made of the same width as Wabash except Market which was 99 feet wide. What was called the "county road" was identified with the present Eighth Street.

The first steamer reached Terre Haute in 1822 and by 1838 as many as 800 steamers came here from New Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh.

The first newspaper arrived in 1823 and the dissemination of news forged another link in the unifying of the new country. Later the railroads eliminated the need of the Pony Express and again communication was quickened. The telegraph and telephone put in a later appearance, but their arrival proved that Terre Haute was growing up.

The first mayor of the town of Terre Haute was Elijah Tillotson who was elected in May, 1838. His last resting place is marked by a monument in the south central part of Woodlawn cemetery.

In April, 1853, Terre Haute was incorporated as a city under the laws of the state enacted in 1852. The first election was held May 30, 1853, and William H. Edwards was chosen the first mayor of the city.

The Heritage of the Wabash Valley

In that far off and long ago, the Wabash flowed through wilderness so dense that the sunlight scarcely penetrated to the ground. In the soothing company of stately sycamores, honey locusts, and stalwart oaks, its rippling waters murmured to the moon of the unbelievable changes ahead, and of the noble men and women destined to heed the call to a new country, a new freedom.

Then came humanity and the unbroken forest vibrated with life and color. Red savages roamed the woods and contended with each other for supremacy. The Miamis and Kickapoos, the Shawnees and Potawatommies stalked the deer and buffalo while they dreaded the coming of the white man. The birch bark canoe glided up and down the Wabash, and after a lapse of time, a trading post was born where the white man exchanged colorful calico, beads, and mirrors for the red man's furs.

When once the realization took root that the fertile fields of the "Prairie City" to be offered rich opportunities for home building, covered wagons with lumbering oxteams began to appear against the horizon, and swishing through the tall grasses, rode straight into the land of promise. The simple furniture and cooking utensils housed under the canvas of covered wagons was for hundreds of eager pioneers a temporary shelter, while around the dancing flames of their campfires they broke bread and planned their future homes, the humble hearth-stones that would grow into castles where children might grow into sturdy men and women—builders of the Wabash Valley Empire.

The Wabash became the artery of travel and traffic in all this section through the forethought of the pioneers; moreover it saved them from stagnation and the death of isolation. Its waters became the life blood, the fluid power that flowed through the channels of trade and stimulated business then in its primi-

THE CONSTRUCTION OF FORT HARRISON, 175 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, WAS THE SINGULAR MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN THE CITY OF TERRE HAUTE'S HISTORY.

HAD WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON CHOSEN ANOTHER SITE TO BUILD A STOCKADE FORT IN OCTOBER, 1811, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT A VILLAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN PLATTED HERE AS EARLY AS 1816.

THERE STILL WOULD HAVE BEEN A "TERRE HAUTE." IN FACT, TERRE HAUTE EXISTED FOR MANY YEARS PRIOR TO HARRISON'S ARRIVAL. AS EARLY AS 1720, FRENCH SETTLERS REFERRED TO "TERRE HAUTE," MEANING "HIGH LANDS," AS THE DIVISION BETWEEN ITS CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS NEW ORLEANS GOVERNMENT. BUT THAT "TERRE HAUTE OF THE OUABACHE OR WABASH RIVER" WAS PROBABLY A LOCATION, NOT A PLACE.

BY 1750 TERRE HAUTE WAS A PLACE. COMMUNICATIONS FROM FRENCH POSTS IN THE AREA, INCLUDING FORT MIAMIS AT PRESENT DAY FORT WAYNE, OUIATANON SOUTH OF PRESENT LaFAYETTE, AND POST ST. ANGE OR VINCENNES, TO FRENCH GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS REFER TO OBTAINING SUPPLIES AND PROVISIONS "AT TERRE HAUTE."

IN 1795 JOHN WADE, A BRITISH SOLDIER, STOPPED AT "TEREHOTE" ON HIS WAY UP THE WABASH AND EXAMINED THE REMAINS OF THE "OLD FRENCH FORT" WHICH WERE STILL VISIBLE. WADE IDENTIFIED THE FORT'S LOCATION AS BEING 27 MILES (AS THE RIVER FLOWED) SOUTH OF THE CONFLUENCE OF THE WABASH AND BROUILLETTE CREEK IN NORTHERN VIGO COUNTY.

A KICKAPOO VILLAGE NAMED "TERRE HAUTE" WAS LOCATED AT OR NEAR THIS CITY IN THE MID-1750s. IN 1801 FRENCH TRADERS WERE ISSUED LICENSES TO SELL FURS AND SUPPLIES TO THE MIAMI AND WEA INDIANS "AT TERRE HAUTE." THE WEA VILLAGE OF "OLD ORCHARDTOWN" OR WEATANO WAS LOCATED AT THE SITE OF THE PRESENT PILLSBURY PLANT.

BY 1811 THE ONLY WHITE MEN IN THE AREA WERE INDIAN TRADERS AND HEARTY EXPLORERS WHO TRAVELED THE WABASH TO GET TO AND FROM VINCENNES AND ITS ADJOINING MILITARY POST, FORT KNOX. THE CLOSEST SETTLEMENT WAS PROBABLY NEAR PRESENT-DAY CARLISLE.

THE INDIANA TERRITORY HAD BEEN CARVED OUT OF THE OLD NORTHWEST TERRITORY IN 1800. HARRISON WAS APPOINTED TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR AND SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS. HIS JOB WAS A FORMIDABLE ONE. THE TERRITORY HAD BEEN HOME TO INDIANS FOR WELL OVER A CENTURY AND, UNDER THE TREATY OF PARIS OF 1783, ENGLAND HAD CEDED ITS INTEREST IN THE TERRITORY TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONISTS.

IN SPITE OF THE CESSATION, THE BRITISH ENTERTAINED HOPES THAT THEY COULD REGAIN SIZABLE REAL ESTATE WEST OF THE ALLEGHENY MOUNTAINS. THEIR HOPES WERE NOT FAR-FETCHED. THE NEW UNITED STATES WAS HEAVILY IN DEBT, ITS ARMY DEPLETED AND RESOURCES MEAGER. THOUGH TECHNICALLY BARRED BY TREATY FROM

ENCROACHING INTO THE NEW WEST, THE BRITISH INTERFERED WITH AMERICAN COMMERCE ON THE SEAS AND SUBSIDISED INDIAN INTERFERENCE BY FURNISHING CLOTHING, ARMS AND AMMUNITION.

BETWEEN 1803 AND 1809, HARRISON SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATED A NUMBER OF TREATIES WITH THE TRIBES OCCUPYING THE INDIANA TERRITORY, PURCHASING TRACTS OF VARYING SIZES AND EXTRACTING PLEDGES FROM THE REDMEN THAT THEY WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH AMERICAN OCCUPATION.

TECUMSEH, A SHAWNEE CHIEF WHO HAD BEEN BORN AND RAISED IN THE OHIO TERRITORY, VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED THE TREATIES. HE CONTENDED THAT A TRIBE, REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION OF ITS CURRENT HOME, HAD NO RIGHT TO SELL OR NEGOTIATE AWAY RIGHTS RETAINED BY INDIANS AS A RACE. AN ELOQUENT SPOKESMAN, TECUMSEH RALLIED INDIAN TRIBES WHO HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN THE TREATIES TO OPPOSE THESE INVASIONS. HIS BROTHER ELKSWATAWA, A SELF-PROCLAIMED PROPHET AND MEDICINE MAN, JOINED HIM IN THE EFFORT.

HARRISON RESPECTED TECUMSEH. THE TWO MET ON AT LEAST THREE OCCASIONS WITHOUT SUCCESS TO DISCUSS THEIR DIFFERENCES. ON JULY 27, 1811, THE PAIR MET FOR THE FINAL TIME AT GROUSELAND, HARRISON'S HOME AT VINCENNES. TECUMSEH, ACCOMPANIED BY OVER 300 WARRIORS, AGAIN EARNESTLY INSISTED UPON THE RETURN OF LANDS CEDED BY THE DELAWARE AND MIAMI INDIANS AT THE TREATY OF FORT WAYNE OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1809. HARRISON REFUSED.

ON AUGUST 5 TECUMSEH DEPARTED ON HORSEBACK FOR THE SOUTH TO CONVINCE SOUTHERN TRIBES TO JOIN AN INDIAN FEDERATION INTENT ON RECOVERING THE LANDS BY VIOLENCE. IN HIS ABSENCE ELKSWATAWA INSPIRED ATTACKS ON WHITE SETTLEMENTS ON BOTH SIDES ON THE WABASH RIVER. OPERATING FROM "PROPHET'S TOWN" OR KEH-TIP-A-QUO-WONK, HIS VILLAGE ON THE WEST BANK OF THE WABASH WHERE IT MEETS THE TIPPECANOE RIVER, THE PROPHET ASSEMBLED WARRIORS FROM FOREIGN TRIBES, SOME LOCATED IN MICHIGAN AND WISCONSIN.

MEANWHILE, HARRISON WAS CONFIDENT THAT AN INDIAN CONFRONTATION WAS IMMINENT. IN THE SPRING HE HAD APPEALED TO PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO MEET THE THREAT. WHEN TECUMSEH REFUSED TO CHANGE HIS POSITION, HARRISON CONCLUDED THAT MILITARY ACTION WAS NECESSARY BEFORE THE INDIAN FEDERATION GAINED UNCONTROLLABLE SIZE AND STRENGTH. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT A MILITARY POST BE ESTABLISHED HIGHER UP THE WABASH, CLOSER TO PROPHET'S TOWN.

ON AUGUST 3, A COMMITTEE OF VINCENNES CITIZENS, INCLUDING FRANCIS VIGO, MADE A PLEA TO THE PRESIDENT TO CAUSE THE DISPERSION OF HOSTILE INDIANS AT PROPHET'S TOWN. WITHIN WEEKS, THE FOURTH REGIMENT OF THE UNITED STATES INFANTRY UNDER COLONEL JOHN PARKE BOYD WAS DISPATCHED FROM PITTSBURG TO FORT KNOX, THREE MILES NORTH OF VINCENNES. HARRISON SOUGHT VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPLEMENT THE ARMY. INDIANA AND KENTUCKY MILITIAS ANSWERED THE CALL.

HARRISON'S DECISION TO BUILD A ONE-ACRE FORT HERE ON HIS WAY TO A CONFRONTATION WITH ELKSWATAWA WAS A STUDIED ONE. LONG BEFORE LEAVING FORT KNOX WITH NEARLY 900 SOLDIERS ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1811, HARRISON HAD DIRECTED INDIAN SCOUT JOSEPH LISTON TO SURVEY THIS AREA, PLOW A FIELD AND PLANT A CROP TO FEED HIS TROOPS IN THE FALL.

LISTON AND HIS FATHER, EDMOND LISTON, HIS FIRST BROTHER-IN-LAW REUBEN MOORE, WILLIAM E. ADAMS, MARTIN ADAMS AND WILLIAM DRAKE ARE CREDITED WITH PLOWING, PLANTING AND HARVESTING THE FIRST CORN CROP IN THE COUNTY ON LOCKPORT ROAD TWO AND ONE-HALF MILES SOUTHEAST OF THE COURT HOUSE. THE CORN WAS SOLD TO HARRISON'S ARMY.

ON OCTOBER 3, THE SOLDIERS COMMENCED CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT ON THE PRAIRIE WHICH HAD BEEN THE SITE OF A SIZABLE INDIAN BATTLE REFERRED TO BY THE FRENCH AS THE "BATAILLE DES ILLINOIS" OR BATTLE OF THE ILLINOIS INDIANS. WHEN THIS BATTLE OCCURRED AND THE PRECISE IDENTITY OF ITS COMBATANTS ARE IN DOUBT.

SOME HISTORIANS SUGGEST THAT THE ILLINOIS INDIANS FOUGHT THE POWERFUL IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY HERE IN EITHER 1680 OR 1690. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THE ILLINOIS, WITH THE HELP OF OTHER TRIBES, CONFRONTED AND DEFEATED THE PESKY RENARDS (ALSO KNOWN AS THE FOX INDIANS) HERE DURING THE SECOND FOX WAR IN 1730.

THE FORT WAS DESIGNED TO BE A STOREHOUSE FOR SUPPLIES AND A SHELTER IN THE EVENT OF DEFEAT OR DISASTER. IT WAS CONSIDERED THE MOST SUITABLE SITE FOR A FORT IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF THE 10 O'CLOCK LINE, WHICH CROSSED THE MOUTH OF RACCOON CREEK HEADING SOUTHEAST. THE LINE, ESTABLISHED BY THE 1809 TREATY AT FORT WAYNE, WAS THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF INDIANA WHEN IT BECAME A STATE IN 1816.

HARRISON'S GARRISON WAS LOCATED AT A SHARP EASTWARD BEND IN THE RIVER ON A SLIGHT INCLINE THIRTY FEET ABOVE THE WATERLINE, PROVIDING A GOOD VIEW BOTH UP AND DOWN STREAM.

THE TROOPS' FOUR-WEEK STAY IN PRESENT-DAY VIGO COUNTY WAS NOT UNEVENTFUL. HIS SOLDIERS WERE PLAGUED WITH ILLNESS WHICH WAS BLAMED, IN PART, ON A SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES. UNTIL THE MID-OCTOBER RAINS THE WABASH WAS TOO LOW TO PERMIT THE SUPPLY CONTRACTOR TO BRING HEAVY BOATS UP THE RIVER; HOWEVER, DEER, TURKEY, HONEY AND FISH WERE PLENTIFUL. ON OCTOBER 4 ONE SOLDIER CAUGHT A 122-POUND CATFISH IN THE WABASH.

IN THE FIRST WEEK OF ENCAMPMENT THE ONLY INDIANS CONFRONTED WERE FRIENDLY. THE SOLDIERS VISITED OLD ORCHARDTOWN AND SEVERAL OTHER INDIAN VILLAGES IN THE VICINITY. MORE THAN 30 DELAWARE INDIANS AND A BAND OF MIAMIS JOINED HARRISON AND WERE USED FOR SCOUTING AND HUNTING MISSIONS.

DESPITE CAREFUL GUARD, THE PROPHET'S SPIES SCOUTED THE CAMPSITE DAILY. ON OCTOBER 10 AT 8:10 P.M., AN AMBUSH FROM PROPHET'S TOWN SHOT AND

SERIOUSLY WOUNDED ONE OF THE SENTRIES, CAUSING HARRISON GREAT CONCERN. A NUMBER OF SOLDIERS, ILL AND COLD, DESERTED IN THE DAYS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ATTACK AS REPORTS WERE RECEIVED THAT THE PROPHET HAD ASSEMBLED AS MANY AS 2000 WARRIORS, COMPLETE WITH BRITISH ARMS.

HARRISON APPEALED FOR MORE TROOPS. BY THE TIME THE SOLDIERS DEPARTED THE COMPLETED FORT, TWO MORE COMPANIES OF KENTUCKY VOLUNTEERS CAME FROM VINCENNES TO ASSIST. THE KENTUCKIANS BECAME ENAMORED BY THE COARSE PRAIRIE BLUE GRASS DUE TO ITS POSITIVE EFFECT OF THEIR HORSES AND SOME TOOK THE TURF HOME FOLLOWING THE BATTLE AT TIPPECANOE.

THE FORT WAS SQUARE: 150 FEET ON ALL SIDES. TWO-STORY BLOCKHOUSES, 20 FEET SQUARE, WERE LOCATED ON THREE CORNERS, TWO ON THE WEST SIDE. EACH SECOND STORY EXTENDED BEYOND THE WALLS SO THAT GUARDS COULD SEE THE OUTSIDE ON THREE SIDES THROUGH WINDOWS. THE ENTRANCE GATE FACED EAST. A TRENCH FOUR FEET DEEP SURROUNDED THE STRUCTURE.

BARRACKS WERE LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE BETWEEN THE BLOCKHOUSES. A LOG GUARD HOUSE WAS CONSTRUCTED OUTSIDE THE FORT ON THE NORTH AND INDEPENDENT BLOCKHOUSES FOR STORAGE LATER WERE LOCATED ON THE RESERVATION WHICH, DURING THE WAR OF 1812, CONSISTED OF 1375.23 ACRES ON THE EAST BANK OF THE WABASH AND 487 ACRES ACROSS THE RIVER AND TO THE NORTH. THE LUMBER CAME FROM OAK AND HONEY LOCUST TREES LOCATED IN A GROVE NEAR THE CAMP.

THE FORT'S ORIGINAL NAME WAS CAMP BATAILLE DES ILLINOIS. IN FACT, HARRISON USED THE NAME AS A RETURN ADDRESS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE SENT FROM THE CAMP. HAD IT BEEN RETAINED, THE INDIAN BATTLE AND THE PRAIRIE UPON WHICH IT OCCURRED MAY STILL BE REFERRED TO IN INDIANA HISTORY BOOKS. INSTEAD, COLONEL JOSEPH DAVIESS SUGGESTED AT A CEREMONY ON OCTOBER 28, 1811 -- THE DAY PRIOR TO THE ARMY'S DEPARTURE FOR PROPHET'S TOWN -- THAT THE FORT BE NAMED "FORT HARRISON" AFTER ITS GENERAL. DAVIESS CHRISTENED THE STRUCTURE WITH A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY, A POPULAR AND SEEMINGLY VITAL SUPPLY FOR A FRONTIER ARMY.

HARRISON'S TROOPS HEADED NORTH ON OCTOBER 29 LEAVING 100 MEN, PARTICULARLY THE INCAPACITATED, TO GUARD FORT HARRISON UNDER LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES MILLER. A SMALL BLOCKHOUSE, CHRISTENED FORT BOYD, WAS BUILT ON OCTOBER 31 WHERE THE VERMILLION RIVER MEETS THE WABASH. THE FAMOUS TIPPECANOE BATTLE OCCURRED ON NOVEMBER 6. THIRTY-EIGHT AMERICANS DIED IN THAT ENGAGEMENT BUT THE PROPHET WAS HUMILIATED AND HIS VILLAGE DESTROYED. SEVERAL DAYS LATER FORT HARRISON WAS THE SITE OF A BRIEF VICTORY CELEBRATION.

SIGNIFICANTLY FOR THOSE OF US WHO NOW LIVE HERE, THE AREA SURROUNDING THE FORT BECAME OCCUPIED BY SETTLERS WHO DESIRED TO BE LOCATED NEAR A MAJOR TRADING POST. LAND NEAR FORT HARRISON BECAME A GOOD INVESTMENT, AS

ATTRACTIVE AS ANY LAND IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY. MAJOR ABRAHAM MARKLE WAS AMONG THOSE SETTLERS AND HIS MILLS ON OTTER CREEK ENHANCED THE AREA'S DESIREABILITY.

THE VILLAGE OF TERRE HAUTE WAS PLATTED IN 1816 BY "THE TERRE HAUTE LAND COMPANY" CONSISTING OF MARKLE, THOMAS BULLETT, CUTHBERT BULLETT, HYACINTH LaSALLE AND JONATHAN LINDSEY. THE ORIGINAL TOWN EXTENDED FROM THE RIVER TO FIFTH STREET AND FROM OAK STREET TO EAGLE STREET. CURTIS GILBERT BUILT THE FIRST HOUSE IN THE VILLAGE AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF WATER AND OHIO STREETS.

FORT HARRISON REMAINS AN HISTORIC SITE. IT IS IDENTIFIED AS THE "FORT OF TWO PRESIDENTS:" BOTH HARRISON AND ZACHARY "OLD ROUGH AND READY" TAYLOR, WHO COMMANDED HERE DURING THE BATTLE OF FORT HARRISON ON SEPTEMBER 4 AND 5, 1812 WHEN THE GARRISON WAS VIRTUALLY DESTROYED BY POTTOWATOMIES, BECAME PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

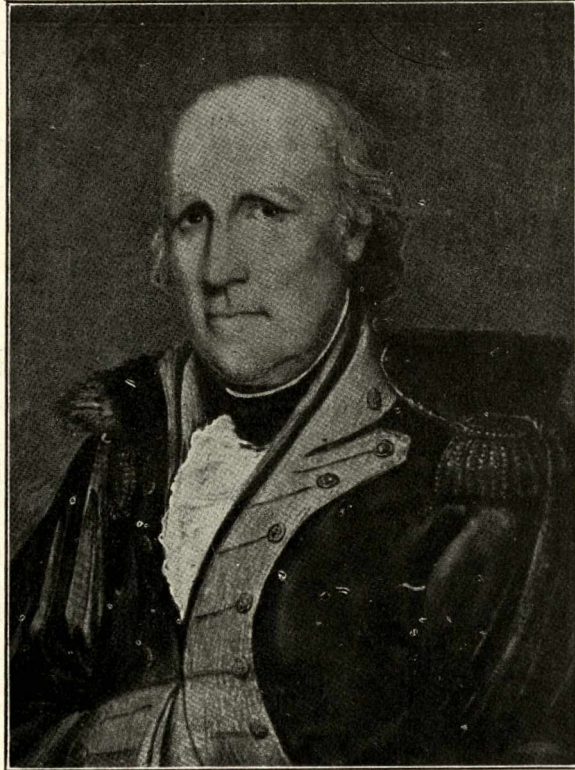
AFTER FORT KNOX WAS ABANDONED IN 1816, FORT HARRISON WAS THE ONLY MILITARY POST ON THE WABASH. OTHER KNOWN COMMANDANTS INCLUDE CAPTAIN JOSIAH SNELLING (FOR WHOM FORT SNELLING, MINNESOTA IS NAMED), MAJOR WILLOUGHBY MORGAN, MAJOR JOHN T. CHUNN AND MAJOR ROBERT STURGIS. CHUNN AND STURGIS, WHO HELPED BUILD THE FORT, BECAME PERMANENT RESIDENTS HERE AFTER THEIR RETIREMENT FROM SERVICE. THE FORT HOSTED MANY DIGNITARIES AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WAS THE SITE OF A SIGNIFICANT INDIAN TREATY WITH THE KICKAPOOS ON JUNE 30, 1819.

SOLDIERS WHO SERVED THE FORT BECAME LEGENDS IN THEIR TIME. AT LEAST 11 INDIANA COUNTIES, INCLUDING HARRISON, TIPTON, PARKE, SPENCER, DUBOIS, FLOYD, WARRICK, RANDOLPH, BARTHOLOMEW, OWEN AND DAVIESS, WERE NAMED AFTER PARTICIPANTS IN ITS CONSTRUCTION.

EVEN AFTER THE MILITARY POST WAS DEACTIVATED IN 1822 THE FORT REMAINED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. BY 1848 ONLY A PORTION OF A BLOCKHOUSE WAS STANDING. CORNELIUS SMOCK USED THE LOGS TO BUILD A HOME.

WHEN THE EMIL EHRLMANN FAMILY PURCHASED THE LAND IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO PRESERVE WHAT REMAINED, INCLUDING THE ABANDONED WABASH & ERIE CANAL WHICH PASSED IT BY. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL EFFORTS TO MAKE THE SITE A PARK. INDEED, EARLY IN THIS CENTURY, CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO MAKING IT A NATIONAL PARK. SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS TO MAKE IT A STATE PARK AND, THEN, A CITY PARK ALSO FAILED THROUGH LACK OF FUNDS.

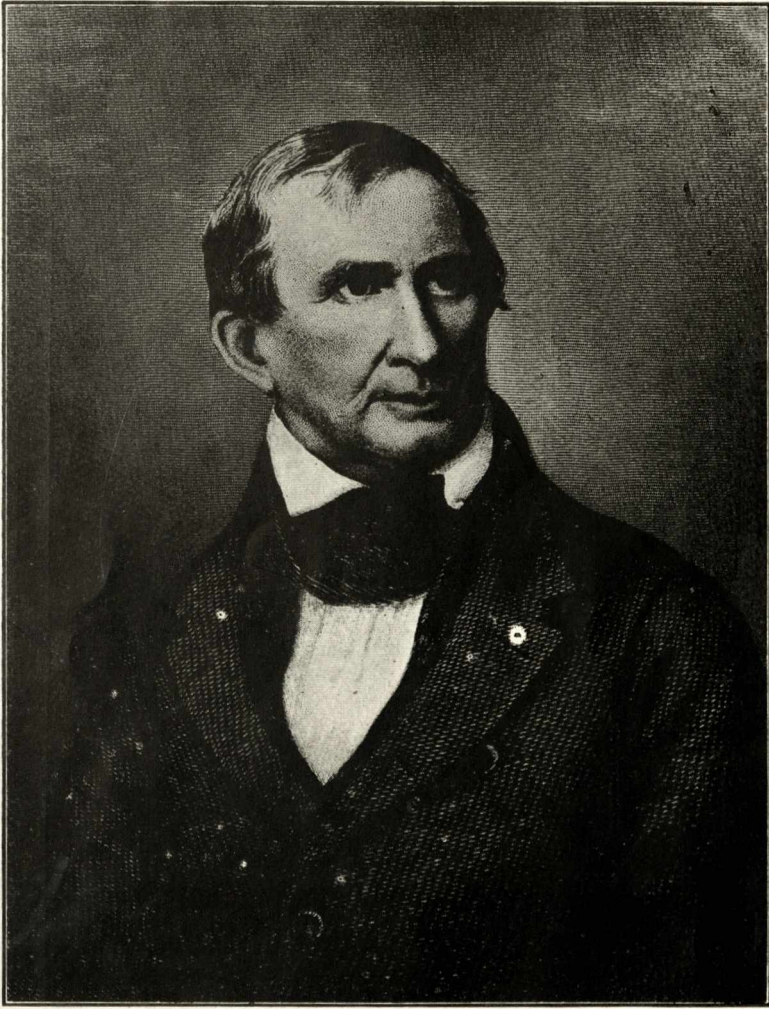
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GENERAL GEORGE ROGERS CLARK

George Rogers Clark, born near Monticello, Alemarle County Virginia Nov. 19, 1752, died near Louisville Kentucky, February 18, 1818. His remains lie buried and obscurely marked in Cave Hill Cemetry, near the place of his death. General Clark's claim to fame was established forever when he captured Vincennes from the British on February 25, 1779. With the capture of Vincennes went the old Northwest territory, including five states, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and a portion of Minnesota.

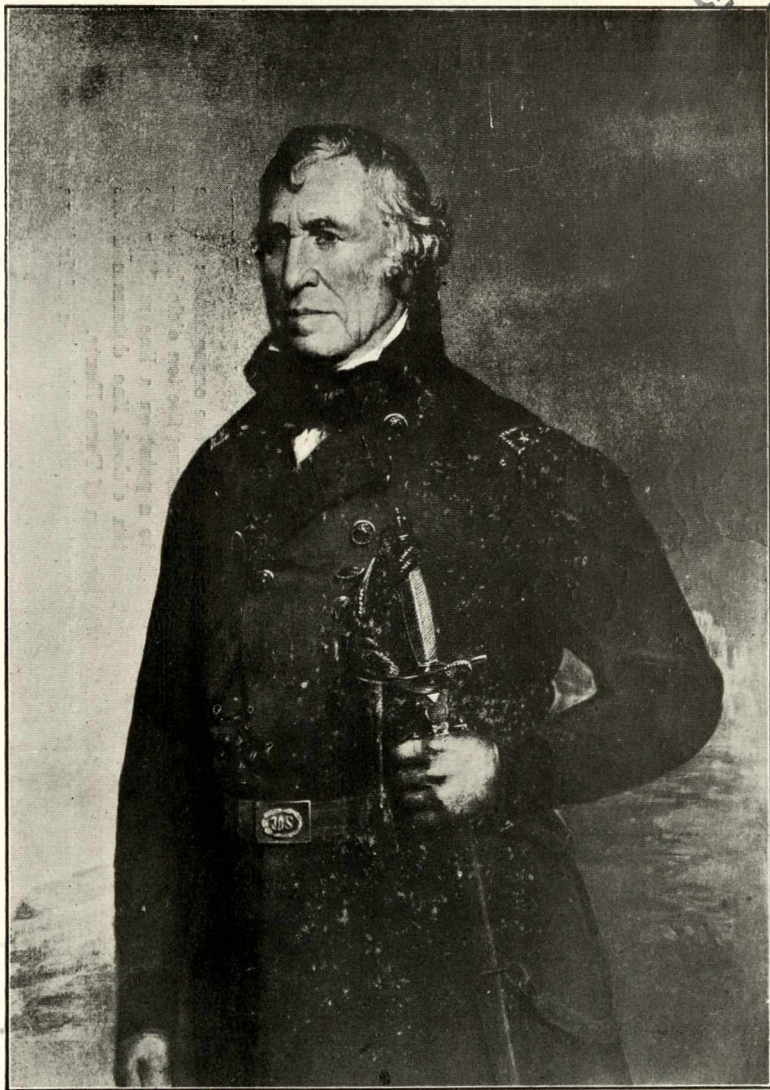
These facts relating to General Clark's great achievement at Vincennes were known to John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay when they met representatives of George III in Paris to make the treaty of Peace which closed the War for American Independence. It was this knowledge of Clark's victory that enabled the American representatives at this peace table to establish the Mississippi River as the western boundary of the United States instead of the crest of the Allegheny Mountains.



WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

William Henry Harrison, third son of Benjamin Harrison, signer of the Declaration of Independence was born in Berkley, Charles City county, Virginia, February 9, 1773, died in the city of Washington, D. C., April 4, 1841. He was educated for the practice of medicine but decided to pursue a military career. He arose gradually to positions of honor and trust, and was elected ninth president of the United States as a Whig. In September 1811 he built Fort Harrison two miles north of Terre Haute, Indiana as a refuge for his soldiers and the pioneer settlers and as a storehouse for supplies. His remains lie buried at North Bend, Ohio, where an elegant piece of memorial art has been erected in his honor. General Harrison only waited about 75 years for the erection of a memorial that should be an appropriate tribute to the services he rendered his country.

REFERENCE
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GENERAL TAYLOR

Zachary Taylor, born in Orange County Virginia, September 24, 1784. He was the third son of Colonel Richard Taylor who had been on intimate terms with George Washington and had borne a conspicuous part in the War for American Independence. Zachary moved with the family to Louisville, Kentucky, where the father had accepted his share of the bounty bestowed by the Old Dominion in the shape of a land grant. Zachary Taylor entered Fort Harrison as a captain, but left with the rank of Major by brevet, the first time that title had ever been bestowed in the United States Army for services in Indian warfare. This was in recognition of his successful defense of Fort Harrison, a defense that made the white man's scalp safe in the Wabash Valley. After 40 years of successful military service General Taylor was chosen president of the United States as a Whig in 1848. His last public act was an address at the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington monument. His remains lie buried in Louisville, Kentucky, and within the last year were moved into a creditable memorial. General Taylor only waited about 75 years for the erection of a memorial worthy of his services.

Ft. Harrison

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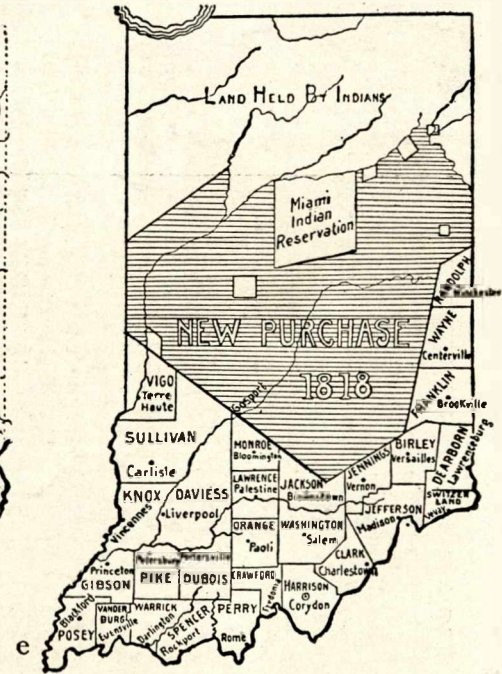
INDIANA ROOM
PAMPHLET FILE



FORT HARRISON IN 1812

Erected in 1811 under the direction of General William Henry Harrison in his campaign and effort to quiet the titles to lands in Indiana. The fort was attacked by force of British and Indians on the night of September 4, 1812. Captain Taylor was in command of the fort and with a force of less than 50 men and two dozen settlers including some women and children the attacking party was repelled. This was a notable event in American history as it was the last stand made by the British in their effort to regain the territory captured by George Rogers Clark a third of a century before. It is worthy of note that the builder of old Fort Harrison, General William Henry Harrison, and the defender of the fort, General Zachary Taylor, should have become presidents of the United States.

The map is a hand-drawn sketch of the Ohio River valley region. It shows the Wabash River flowing from the top left towards the bottom left, and the Ohio River flowing from the top right towards the bottom right. The Ohio River is labeled 'OHIO' at the bottom. Various settlements are marked with dots and labeled: 'Dearborn' (top left), 'Harrison' (middle left), 'Corydon' (bottom center), 'Louisville' (bottom right), and 'Ft. Wayne' (top right). Several treaties are marked with lines and text: 'Treaty of Vincennes Aug 10 and 12, 1804' (bottom left), 'Treaty of St. Mary June 1, 1804' (middle left), 'Treaty of Ft. Wayne Sep 30, 1809' (middle right), and 'Treaty of Ft. Vincennes Aug 1, 1793' (top right). The map also shows the 'Line of Harpers' (top left) and 'Line of Ft. Wayne' (middle right). The word 'OHIO' is written in large letters at the bottom. A scale bar at the bottom right indicates distances from 0 to 40 miles.



The map on the left shows treaty boundary lines. The United States Government began to acquire legal titles to Indiana lands soon after the organization of the Northwest territory. This map, among other treaty lines shows the ten o'clock line,—a line drawn from the mouth of Big Raccon Creek to a point on a line making the northwest line of the treaty of Grousland. This ten o'clock line determined the location of Fort Harrison in 1811 and finally the location of Terre Haute.

The map on the right shows the organization of additional counties and the gradual conquest of Indian lands.

INDIANA ROOM

Col. Nathaniel Huntington

PAMPHLET FILE

Volume one of The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge dated 1839 has the following article :

THE BATTLE GROUND. It will be twenty-three years, on the seventh of November next, since the North-western Indiana, under the Shawnee prophet, brother of Tecumseh, were defeated by the United States troops under General Harrison. The battle ground lies only a few miles above La Fayette, on the Wabash, near the "prophet's town; a region which was then untamed, and where the Indians had been undisputed lord, from time beyond tradition. This bloody battle had been principally fought before the dawn, on the morning of the seventh of November, 1811. During that day and the succeeding, the American forces remained on the field, interred their dead, and prepared for a return down the Wabash, which was commenced on the ninth. A few days after the departure of General Harrison and his gallant army, the routed Indians returned to the field of their overthrow; tore our killed from their graves, scalped them, and left their bones to bleach upon the open plain; and, according to the Kentucky Gazette of that time, the Indians buried their own killed in the same graves where our honored dead had been deposited. The bones of our countrymen lay whitening, scattered over the field, until a few years ago; at which time Captain Huntington, of Terre Haute, with a company of young men, re-visited the battle-field, partially collected the bones of the fallen, and inhumed them in a different place from their original deposit. POLITICAL CLARION"

Further research on this subject we find in the Vigo County History The "Of Col. Huntington, we may say in passing, he was the first lawyer who opened an office in Terre Haute. He was a man of fine abilities, and took high rank in the legal fraternity of the state. His early death was deeply regretted, as no doubt, had he lived

he would have risen to high legal honors. He had the elements of a great man and statesman. The Col. was fond of military affairs and was at one time in command of a regiment of state militia. He used to drill his men on open ground near the Terre Haute House.

The Vigo County History quotes from the "Western Register and Terre Haute Advertiser" the first paper printed in Terre Haute July 31, 1823. "Nathaniel Huntington is a candidate to represent the counties Vigo and Parke in the next general assembly! The second number has the following:

Under the date of October 22, 1823, we find this notice. "The Wabash Greens will meet at the house of Captain N. Huntington, November 1, thence to proceed in martial order to the battle-ground of Tippecanoe, and collect the bones of the American heroes who fell in the engagement, in as decent a manner as possible inter them, and erect some temporary preservation around the grave.

Signed, Elisha M. Huntington
Company Judge Advocate."

In speaking of J.W. Osborn, editor of the Western Register and Terre Haute Advertiser the history says: Early one lovely morning he arrived at the Tippecanoe battle-ground, where he discovered after the soldiers had left the field the Indians had returned and dug up the remains of the brave heroes and stripped, scalped and tomahawked them and left them to be devoured by wild beasts, and the bones had lain bleaching in the sun and storms for twelve years. When Mr Osborn returned to Terre haute he had an interview with Capt Nathaniel Huntington, and induced him to proceed with his company of cavalry, The Wabash Greens to Tippecanoe. The remains of the brave men were carefully collected by them and reinterred with military honors

measures of military preparedness at the present time makes the following letter from William Henry Harrison, then Governor of Indiana, to Governor Shelby of Kentucky, on the subject of state militia, of special interest. No man in the history of our country had a better right to speak with authority on the conduct of the state militia than Governor Harrison. He was a command of militia or serving with it from 1793, when Gen. Anthony Wayne began his campaign, until the end of the war of 1812. He was not trained in the regular army and consequently can not be said to have been prejudiced against the militia. It is believed the letter will contribute something to the general understanding of the military situation of today.

VINCENNES, Ind., March, 1809.

Dear Sir—Since it appears probable that our government will not be able much longer to pursue that system of accommodation and forbearance from which it has derived so much honor, and the people so much prosperity. It is not surprising that more than common solicitude should be manifested to effect a more perfect and effective organization and discipline of the militia. I have accordingly observed that in all the communications, which have been lately made by the executives of the states and territories to their respective Legislatures, the subject has been pressed with more than common earnestness. The manner in which you noticed it to the General Assembly of Kentucky particularly engaged my attention because I always calculated that the weight of your character and influence, added to the authority of chief magistrate, would do much in the removal of those errors which unfortunately pervade all our militia systems; and that, under your auspices and guidance, the hardy sons of Kentucky would afford an example of military discipline, as they frequently have of military ardor, which would produce the most beneficial effects to our country.

I knew indeed, that ignorance, obstinacy, and deep rooted prejudices, were to be overcome; but I flattered myself that your fellow citizens would listen to the advice of an old and faithful friend, whose military experience had been acquired in many a bloody field, and whose patriotism and disinterestedness had been manifested through a long life devoted to their service.

In the list of acts passed at the last session of your Legislature I observe one to amend the militia laws. I am not informed in what those amendments consist but to answer any valuable purpose they must be such as would leave the features of your former system. I have never seen any of the militia laws of the Eastern states, but those of the Southern, middle and Western states so nearly resemble each other that the observations I shall make will apply to all, and that these are radically defective one melancholy fact sufficiently demonstrates, with the exception of large towns, where there are volunteer military associations, entirely independent of the militia law, there a single brigade, from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson, and from the Monaca to the Mississippi so well disciplined as to perform the common evolutions which the laws direct them to be performed with sufficient precision to satisfy

those who composed the various expeditions undertaken in the course of the Indian war, when no attempt to train them to regular discipline had been made. No one who is in the least acquainted with what the militia were, and what they are now, can answer the question affirmatively. It follows, then, that our militia laws have been of no use, and that the time which has been spent by our citizens in days of muster is just so much lost to themselves and the community; or, rather, worse than lost, for it is too well known that they are generally devoted to riot and intemperance.

I have never met with a single individual who would affirm that he had derived any benefit from the militia musters. The industrious man and the good citizen attend them because the laws direct them to do so, and to save their fines; but they make their escape as soon as possible, with the conviction

in the face of such an enemy if it had not been familiar to them from long previous practice; and at Mantinea, although their operations were directed by a perfect master of the art of war who did everything that depended on him by putting the wing of the enemy, composed of Athenians, in the air (A body of troops in action are said to be "in the air" when they are placed in such a situation, either by the blunders of their own general or by the talents of his adversary, as to be useless. Thus, in the battle above referred to Epaminondes posted 5,000 men so advantageously as completely to keep in check the whole Athenian wing, which could not move to the assistance of the Spartans without exposing their flanks, and thereby subjecting themselves to destruction,) and bringing his Thebans to act hand in hand with the Spartans, the event still depended upon superior valor or superior discipline. Valor was no more predominant with the Thebans than with the Spartan infantry, and their evolutions were as well under-

the superior compactness of the Spartan wedge, composed of the proverbially stupid Boeotians, the scorn of Greece, which practice had enabled them to preserve, triumphed over the descendants of Leonidas and the pupils of Agesilaus.

"The troops with which the great Frederick commenced the Silesian war had never heard the report of a hostile gun, but in the battles of Moltwitz, of Prague and of Roseback they practiced those lessons which they had been taught in the peaceful fields of Berlin and Potsdam. When he was preparing for his first campaign the Austrian minister wished to dissuade him from the enterprise by inspiring him with fears for a contest, where his parade battalions would have to encounter the veteran troops of his mistress, the Empress Queen, whose valor and discipline had been proved in fields of actual danger.

"Your Majesty's troops are very fine," said he, "but you must recollect that ours are ^{seen} the wolf."

up in the practice of those exercises which will enable them to bear with the duties of the camp and the labors of the field.

It will, no doubt, be urged as a reason for continuing the old plan that the poorer class of our citizens can not spare five or six weeks in a year from their farms to learn military duty. I know that they can not without being paid. But is not our government able to pay them? If not, they ought to make themselves so by laying on additional taxes. But I am persuaded that the money which is devoted to other objects might be more usefully, and certainly more consistently, applied to this purpose. Under our present circumstances the 6,000 regular troops we have are very proper; but I think that 100,000 disciplined militia would be better, and that the money which is spent in the former would soon effect the discipline of the latter. I am far from thinking a fleet unnecessary, and there is no man who attaches more importance to the improvement of our country by canals and roads. I do not think, however, that these should be the first objects on which our revenue should be expended, and I recollect to have read that every man in Rome was a soldier

before they had a fleet, or an Applan or Flaminian way. The defense of every despotic government is a standing army. Despots, therefore, make it the first object of their care and expense. The safety of a republic entirely depends on the discipline of its militia, and we very inconsistently make it the last object of our attention.

Our laws generally prescribe a battalion muster in the spring and a regimental one in the fall. It rarely happens that more than one of these take place, but in the few instances where punctuality is observed, and where the commanding officer is capable and really attempts to instruct his men, it must be evident that the lesson given in the spring will be totally obliterated before the fall, and of that which is given in the latter season not a trace will remain at the expiration of the seven months which brings about the vernal meeting.

How it could be supposed that the science of war could be learned in this manner is most surprising; and yet, bad as it is, this is the best side of the picture; for it is very certain that, throughout the Western country, of those who command the various militia corps, there are very few who are better informed than the men whom they attempt to teach. Our Legislatures appear to be well apprised of the importance of a well-disciplined militia; the preambles to many of the laws express this conviction. But they seem to have supposed that nothing was necessary to effect their wishes, more than to cause the men to be enrolled and formed into companies, regiments, etc., and occasionally to meet together. They did not recollect that, to make men soldiers, instructors were necessary, and to procure these sufficient encouragement should be given to induce

...in a complete
on the system of mod-
her preparation, and as
her knowledge and science as for either
those professions to which the appella-
tion of learning has been applied. Nor
is the skill necessary for maneuvering a
regiment or brigade to be acquired with-
out considerable attention and practical
instruction. It is impossible to acquire it
by reading alone. A man may, indeed,
make himself acquainted with the man-
ner of performing certain maneuvers in
this way; but the grace, the harmony,
and precision of movement, so neces-
sary in all military evolutions, can only
be acquired by practice.

If our Legislatures are really desirous
to have the militia so well disciplined as
to form an effectual defense to our coun-
try against every invader—if they wish to
bring it to such a state of perfection as
entirely to supercede the necessity of a
standing army, the system heretofore in
use must be entirely changed. Instead
of the few days now appropriated to the
purpose of training, and the very few
hours of those days actually employed,
some weeks, at least, must be devoted to
the purpose and the men must be taught
in camps of discipline those duties which,
representing a faithful image of actual
war, form the best school in which it
can be taught.

For the accomplishment of an object so
desirable, no pains or expense should be
spared. Able officers should be sought
after and employed, and every stimulus
should be used to engage our youth to
enter with ardor on a course of discipline
which is to qualify them to defend their
country. Occasional military orations
should teach them the necessity of subor-
dination and obedience, and, by placing
before them the illustrious examples of
military virtue with which the history of
the Grecian and Roman republics abound,
impress on their minds that the temporary
sacrifice of personal liberty, which the
military life imposes, have been cheerfully
submitted to by the purest patriots and
the most zealous republicans. At the
frequent reviews which should take place,
particularly that by the commander in
chief, everything that is fascinating in
military array, the "whole pomp of war,"
should be introduced to keep up the ar-
dor of the youth and excite the emulation
of the several corps. Nor ought rewards
and distinctions to be withheld from those
who excel: the latter to be such only as
accord with our republican institutions.
However trifling would be the intrinsic
value of the former, opinion would soon
render them as precious to the receiver
as the oak or laurel crowns which were
formerly the rewards of successful skill or
valor.

The general government has lately
turned its thoughts to the militia and
has resolved to arm the whole of them.
You, my dear sir, need not be told that
a system of instruction should be com-
menced as soon as the arms are deliv-
ered; and that even with this system the

arms should only be put into the hands
of the men when they had learned to
value and take care of them. Unless this
precaution should be used the millions
of dollars which the arms would cost
would be much better expended upon
gunboats, on which the eloquent author
of the "attempt to arm the whole of the
militia" has lavished so much bitter in-
vectives and sarcasm.

It would certainly be better to apply
the money that is intended to arm the
whole, to discipline and arm a part of
the militia. And it ought to have oc-
curred to Mr. Randolph, than whom no
man is better acquainted with history,
that Carthage possessed arms as well as
Rome, but not, like the latter, a dis-
ciplined militia. Rome, therefore, sur-
vived the defeats of Trebia, of Theo-
poemane, and Cannae, whilst the fate
of Carthage was determined by the

single defeat of Zama. The loss of men,
compared with her population, was noth-
ing. Men in abundance were left, but
no soldiers. Let her militia be dis-
ciplined, and the independence of Amer-
ica would be preserved against a world
united. The loss of her capital and suc-
cessive defeats might distress, but would
not ruin her: as long as she had men
enough to form an army, liberty would
have a temple. In Greece, (as long as
Greece was free), every man was a sol-
dier. Hence it happened that those
small republics could be conquered only
by extirpation. In the disastrous Sicil-
ian expedition, a third of the citizens of
Athens perished, and yet she survived to
reap new laurels, whilst the proud em-
pire of Carthage was humbled in the
dust, by a single defeat. The immortal
victories of Marathon, Salamis and
Platea, were achieved by a disciplined
militia; and the Roman legions, which
conquered the world, were nothing
more. Among those hardy republicans,
nothing could be more disgraceful than
to be thought ignorant of the tactics
then in practice, or to be unable to
manage with skill and dexterity, the
spear and the shield.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON,
Governor: Scott, Kentucky.

Hear the Tread of Pioneers

By John G. Biel

S OCT 14 1955

Old Fort Harrison, which was located about three miles north of the city of Terre Haute—on the site of the present Elks' Fort Harrison Country Club—on the east bank of the Wabash River, twice protected the American frontier in the westward advance of civilization in our nation.

When William Henry Harrison—who later became the ninth President of the United States—was appointed Governor of the Indiana Territory in 1800, he had, together with all the numerous and varied duties of governing the territory, two principal tasks to perform which he found were always conflicting. One of these was to protect

the Indians from unscrupulous traders and against those impetuous and restless pioneers who were continually attempting to encroach upon the Indians' lands; the other was to protect the white settlers from the Indians and to provide room for an expanding population by securing land concessions from the various Indian tribes.

It was the policy of the government under President John Adams, who appointed Harrison to his position as Governor, and under Thomas Jefferson, who continued Harrison in his governorship during his two terms as President, to have the public lands—to which the United States had continental title

but not possession—made available to the white settlers only after open and equitable purchases from the Indians by treaties. Harrison, in carrying out his duties, negotiated a series of treaties with the Indians by which possession to the south one-third of the present state of Indiana together with a large portion of the present state of Illinois was transferred to the United States—a total of over 30,000,000 acres.

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IT WAS the treaty executed at Fort Wayne on Sept. 30, 1809, which precipitated the chain of reactions which brought Fort Harrison into existence. By this treaty, Governor Harrison opened up a very large area of land in the south and central portion of Indiana which was called "Harrison's New Purchase." It included the land from a line on the north drawn from the

mouth of Racoon Creek where it empties into the Wabash River, southeasterly to a point on the east fork of White River about ten miles above Brownstown and took in all the land between that line and the north line of the Old Vincennes Tract which was drawn through Carlyle.

Just prior to this treaty, Tecumseh, a Shawnee, with the help of his brother, known as The Prophet, had set himself up as the leader of the Northwestern Confederacy of Indian Tribes. It was his unalterable position that no Indian tribe could sell any land without the consent of all the tribes. He felt that no matter how much self-interest might lead the white man to flatter the Indian and no matter how avarice and degeneracy might incline the Indian to submit, there never had been—and there never could be—any congeniality between

the two races; that the destruction of his own was inevitable if the bonds between the whites and the Indians were not totally broken. He set out to unite the Indian tribes and to stop the advance of the whites to the West.

Historians are divided in their opinions as to the true motives of Tecumseh. Some feel he did not have the interest of the Indians at heart but was a tool of the British and was only trying to stir up the Indians to a revolt against the Americans so that Britain could retain the country it lost in the Revolutionary War. No matter what his motives, his actions made history.

+ + +

TECUMSEH was gathering together a great band of Indians at Prophet's Town, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River where it empties into the Wabash above the

present city of Lafayette. Harrison had numerous councils with Tecumseh in an effort to induce him to disperse his Indians and to attempt to secure the peaceful settlement of the lands recently purchased. The settlers were congregating at Vincennes waiting to move into the new lands. Before they could be permitted to settle there, the lands must be surveyed but Tecumseh threatened to kill any surveyors who might come into the New Purchase. No matter what Harrison may have thought personally about Tecumseh and his ideals for his race, he was duty bound to open the lands to the pushing, eager settlers. Harrison finally concluded that further negotiations would not settle anything and decided the only way this threat to the interests of the United States could be removed was to go

to Prophet's Town and scatter the Indians by force.

In order to do this, he needed a closer base for his activities than Vincennes and the Fort there. He decided to build a fort in the New Purchase somewhere about half way between Vincennes and the seat of the Indian gathering.

Harrison collected together about 900 men and, with supplies carried in wagons drawn by oxen and with supplies going by boat up the Wabash River, he left the old Fort at Vincennes, on Sept. 26, 1811, to go into the uncharted New Purchase to erect his Fort. He followed the old Wea Indian trail which led out of Vincennes to the small Indian town of We-a-te-no which was where the city of Terre Haute now stands. He arrived here on Oct. 2, 1811, pitched camp and immediately started building a Fort on the high ground along the Wabash River just above his camp. It took his men 25 days to build the Fort. It was completed on Oct. 27, 1811 and dedicated that day being named in his honor.

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WITHOUT extended study and without surveys, it is remarkable that such an advantageous spot could have been chosen for a military fortification. This fort was erected on a sharp eastward bend of the Wabash so that it commanded an excellent view both up and down the river. The land rises 25 to 30 feet above low water mark at this point and was then covered by a light forest of oak, honey locust and other trees which furnished the timber used in building the fort. No plan of the fort is in existence today but the best description of it seems to be that it was about 150 feet square. The west side—facing the river—consisted of a two-story blockhouse 20 feet square at each corner with the barracks for the soldiers built between them. These barracks were stoutly built log houses with, shed roofs sloping toward the inside of the enclosure. The upper story of the blockhouses projected beyond the lower so that the outside of the walls could be seen from this point. The balance of the structure, including the bastions on the

east, was of palisades set upright in a trench about four feet deep. The gate to the fort was in the east wall and the sheds for the livestock, horses and hogs made up the north wall.

From this new base, Harrison set out for Prophet's Town.

DO

Hear the Tread of Pioneers^v

By John G. Biel

5 OCT 21 1953

The first time old Fort Harrison played such an important part in retarding the advance of civilization to the West was in 1811. William Henry Harrison had just completed building his fort on Oct. 7, 1811. He did not want to delay. Tecumseh, the leader of the Indians at Prophet's Town, was way down south trying to get some of the southern Indian tribes to join his confederacy. Only the Prophet, Tecumseh's brother, was in charge of the Indians gathered at the mouth of the Tippecanoe.

Just two days after completing the fort, Harrison, with his small army, left on Oct. 29, 1811, to continue on up to Prophet's Town. He left a small number of men at the fort with the major portion of the supplies and marched forward to the only battle fought on Indiana soil in which the militia of Indiana in any great number took part.

The Army arrived at Prophet's Town in the middle of the afternoon of Nov. 6, 1811. Some of the subordinate commanders, who were anxious for a chance to distinguish themselves, were very cut in their declarations that General Harrison should attack at

once. Long years afterward, many military critics were very severe in their denunciation of the want of military tact shown by Harrison at this time. This one battle has caused more controversy and has had more written about it than any other one battle fought on American soil. Harrison decided not to attack. He met the Indians for a talk but they adjourned to meet the next morning. The Army went into camp and no one expected a battle that night. Most historians agree that on that evening the Indians had no intention of bringing on a battle that night. Something happened however.

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TRADITION has it that White Loon, one of the three chiefs in immediate command during the battle, told afterward that there was no intention to fight that night. During the early part of the night, however, Winamac, a Pottawatomie chief, arrived in town and as soon as he learned of the condition of things, he went to the Prophet and told him it was now or never; that they could have their forces ready to attack in the early hours of the morning and that they could slip up on the Americans and murder them as they slept in camp. Most

of the Indians argued against this idea but when Winamac threatened to leave with all his followers, they agreed to his plans and spent the rest of the night organizing their forces.

Every precaution was taken by Harrison that night as he was perfectly convinced of the hostility of the Prophet but he really did not expect to be attacked. He had just awakened, at about four o'clock on the morning of the seventh, and was getting the drummer ready to waken the men when the Indians attacked. It was raining and it was dark. Except for the few guards all the men were still asleep. They immediately arose and put out the camp fires. The General mounted his horse and proceeded to the point of attack. Several of the companies had taken their places in line within forty seconds from the report of the first gun and, it is said, the entire army was prepared for battle in two minutes.

The battle soon became general and it is reported that it proceeded with bravery and even desperate valor on both sides. The Indians advanced and retreated, yelling and screaming and with the accompaniment of a rattling noise made with dried deer hoofs. The battle raged with unabating fury and mutual slaughter until daylight when a gallant and successful charge of the troops drove the Indians into a swamp and put an end to the conflict.

The loss of the Army under Harrison was 37 killed in action and 151 injured. Twenty-five of these died afterward of their wounds. The loss of the Indians was serious but as they always carried away all their wounded and the women and old men were burying the ones killed even while the battle was going on, no one knows what their actual loss was. One report was that there were 54 dead on the field and there were 45 new graves near the town. One old Indian woman who was captured said that there were 197 Indians missing. The Indians were under the immediate command of White Loon, Stone Eater and Winamac.

It was never known how many Indians were in the battle but after all the evidence was sifted many years afterward, it was felt that both sides had about the same number of men in the battle. Immediately after their defeat, the Indians dispersed.

+ + +

HARRISON burned the town two days later. On Nov. 8, Harrison buried his dead and burned log heaps over their graves but the Indians afterward dug them up hunting for trinkets. He left this camp on the ninth, hauling the wounded in wagons after burning all the tents, chests and anything else which could be spared so as to make room in the wagons for the wounded.

Harrison returned to Fort Harrison where he left Captain Snelling with his company of regulars and continued on to Vincennes, where he arrived on Nov. 18, 1811.

Had General Harrison lost his battle, the results would have been disastrous. There would have been nothing between the Indians and Vincennes which was the frontier line of civilization at the time. With only the small fringe of settlement which was on the southern borders of Indiana in 1811, no defense could have been made as all the Indians, with such a victory spurring them on, would have banded with Tecumseh and The Prophet and turned against the defeated whites. The permanent settlement of this country would have been retarded for many years and the war of 1812, instead of commencing on the northern borders of the Northwest Territory, as it did, would have commenced on or near the Ohio River with results that are hard to guess.

DO NOT REFERENCE

Special Co.

I Hear the Tread of Pioneers

By John G. Biel

5 OCT 28 1955

The second time old Fort Harrison played such an important part in protecting the advance of civilization to the West was in 1812.

The War of 1812 officially started on June 18, 1812. In August of that year Capt. Zachary Taylor—who later became the twelfth President of the United States—was put in command of Fort Harrison. This was a strategic point in that war. It was a part of Britain's plan, here in the West, to take over Fort Harrison so as to deprive the Americans of any control over the Indians in this region and push the frontier back to Fort Knox at Vincennes.

To this end the British stirred up the Indians in this area and furnished them with arms and ammunition.

John Gibson, acting as Governor of the Indiana territory in the absence of Governor William Henry Harrison, wrote to William Hargrove, who was in command of the rangers in Indiana territory: "The Indians are much better than the British and if they were not constantly urged to take up the tomahawk against the Americans there would be no trouble in keeping peace along the border; but from this on, as long as the war continues, there will be much trouble with all the tribes in the Northwest and along the Wabash."

+ + +

CAPTAIN TAYLOR had been

warned by two friendly Indians that an attack on the fort was being planned. He warned the settlers in the area and they left their cabins and came into the fort for safety. He only had about 50 soldiers at that time and about 30 of them were so sick with fever they could perform no duty at all. Taylor, himself, had just recovered from this fever and was not strong. He was maintaining what guard he could with only 20 men.

On the evening of September 3, 1812, two men who had been putting up hay for the stock at the Fort were shot by the Indians. On Sept. 4, an Indian chief—Lenar—with between 40 and 50 Indians came up to the fort, under a white flag of truce, and wanted to come in on the pretext of getting some food. Taylor would not let them in and strengthened his watch as best he could. About 11:00 o'clock that

night, everyone was awakened by the guns of the sentries. The Indians had sneaked up to the wall of one of the block-houses and set fire to it.

All through that night, the Indians kept up a constant firing accompanied by piercing yells and screams. The block-house burned down but Taylor, in the meanwhile, had erected a wall inside the fort across the corner so that when the block-house burned down the Indians could not get in as they had planned. They found another wall keeping them away from the occupants of the fort. The water in the single well within the fort became so low it was necessary that the wife of one of the settlers in the fort, Julia Lafferty Lambert, go down into the sand-walled well and fill the bucket so that the barracks adjoining the burning block-house could be kept

wet, to prevent the fire from spreading.

+ + +

OVER SIX HUNDRED Indians took part in this attack. There were only 20 able bodied soldiers, 30 very sick ones and a handful of settlers, their wives and children to defend it. When daylight came, at about 6:00 o'clock the next morning, the Indians left. Taylor and his men spent all that day repairing the walls and were on constant watch all the next night, but the Indians did not return. Taylor sent two men floating down the Wabash River, hanging on logs under the very eyes of the Indians, with messages to Fort Knox at Vincennes and the little band stayed closely barricaded in the fort without food or additional soldiers. Col. William Russell, with the Seventh Regiment of United States Infantry of about 1,200 men arrived at the fort on Sept. 16.

Again Fort Harrison held the frontier. This was the turning point in the war. If Fort Harrison had fallen in this attack, it would have opened the way—with nothing in between—for an attack on Vincennes, which at that time was the territorial capitol of the Indiana Territory and the center of business and activity in the western country.

John Gibson wrote to Hargrove: "The brave defense made by Captain Taylor at Fort Harrison is one bright ray amid the gloom of incompetency which has been shown in so many places. . . . The Indians will attempt in many ways to wreck vengeance on the white people."

Thus, Fort Harrison—the site of which is now occupied by the Elk's Country Club a few miles north of Terre Haute, on the east bank of the Wabash River—takes its place in the history of our Country

as a symbol of the courage and resourcefulness that characterized the early advance of the civilization in establishing that government of individual freedoms and liberties which we enjoy today. It is a very important part of our glorious American Heritage.

Fort Harrison

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